



Theatre for Young Audiences in Ireland

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Abstract	<p>This chapter examines the development of Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA), from its roots in educational theatre for children in the 1970s and 1980s through companies such as TEAM, Graffiti and Replay into one of the most innovative and flourishing fields of contemporary theatrical practice across the island of Ireland. The argument is that as a sector and field of practice TYA continues to resist nationalist imperatives through its aesthetic practices and organizational structures. TYA performances are always resolutely “local” in their engagement with specific audiences. This is most obviously articulated in the specific touring circuits for performances; the development of festivals for children’s arts in Dublin and in a number of regional cities; and in the creation of specialist venues for children’s arts and theatre. At the same time, the sector is characterized by direct engagement with models of practice which are shared widely internationally, producing aesthetic forms the lineage of which owes little to specifically Irish theatrical traditions, whether that be the Theatre in Education models adapted from the UK; approaches to visual theatre or modes of performance adopted from continental Europe; or texts that have been adapted, translated or imported. Critical to this is the function of the international dimension of children’s festivals in Ireland and abroad in showcasing and sharing theatrical practices and issues. In this sense then, this sector of Irish theatre serves to work against the sense of “Irishness” as a globalized commodity and the function of theatre to reflect national rather than local concerns.</p>		

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AUTHOR QUERIES

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AU3 INTRODUCTION 3

This chapter examines the developing sector of Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) from its roots in educational theatre for children in the 1970s into one of the most innovative and flourishing fields of contemporary theatrical practice across the island of Ireland. As noted in Sara Keating’s 2014 article for the *Irish Times*, “Baboró and beyond: Irish kids’ theatre comes of age”, children’s theatre in Ireland has a strong aesthetic identity, dedicated venues and a deep connection with Irish audiences. Today in Ireland, a TYA production may be explicitly local in its engagement with a specific audience yet draw on models of practice that are shared widely internationally, within an aesthetic form the lineage of which owes little to specifically Irish theatrical traditions. Such aesthetic forms might include Theatre in Education (TiE) models that originated in Coventry’s Belgrade Theatre; approaches to visual theatre or modes of performance adopted from continental Europe; or texts that have been adapted, translated or imported from any number of contexts and sources. Critical to this international exchange is the function of festivals in Ireland and abroad in showcasing and sharing theatrical practices and issues. Nonetheless, the sector is distinctively organized through separate organizations on each side of the border. In this sense then, this sector of Irish theatre serves to work against any sense of “Irishness” as a globalized commodity and the function of theatre to reflect national rather than local concerns, while simultaneously drawing strength from collaboration across Ireland that make it distinctive.

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It is not possible within the scope of this chapter to chart exhaustively the precise origins of a professional sector of theatre for children. Eimear Beardmore suggests examples in Georgian pantomime as precursors, with the annual pantomime season at theatres like Dublin's Gaiety and the founding of the Lambert Puppet Theatre in 1972 providing more recent precedents. The proposition here is that the contemporary field draws on the heritage of three specific companies that were focused, at least initially, on using theatre's power for educational purposes: TEAM in Dublin, Graffiti Theatre Company in Cork and Replay in Belfast. These pioneering companies initiated and established many of the parameters for practices within the sector today and the issues that they have faced remain perennial for contemporary companies.

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As Beardmore notes, TEAM was founded after the disbanding of the Young Abbey, Ireland's first TiE company in 1975.¹ In its early days, it was able to avail of ongoing support from the Abbey, so that for example, *Wonder Ponder Time* in December 1975 was directed by Nuala Hayes and Joe Dowling and was produced in association with the Abbey, being staged in its rehearsal room. When Martin Drury took over as artistic director of TEAM in 1981, he sharpened the focus of the company's work by commissioning and developing new work by writers such as Frank McGuinness, Bernard Farrell (both of whom were appointed as writer in residence) and John McArdle. The company published works by these writers in the volume *Three Team Plays* (Drury 1985): these were *Borderlands* (1984) by McGuinness, Farrell's *Then Moses Met Marconi* (1983) and McArdle's, Farrell's *Then Moses Met Marconi* (1989). McGuinness would also contribute *Gatherers* in 1985, while McArdle's *Two Houses* was staged in 1984 and remounted in 1987 and 1990. The company mounted two further plays by Farrell: his adaptation from the German of *Max und Milli* by Volker Ludwig as *One, Two, Three, O'Leary* in 1985 and *Because Just Because* in 1986. Drury extended the reach of TEAM's touring to the Midlands, North East and North West of Ireland. Perhaps core to the company's success under him was that he pulled together a core company of actors committed to TiE practice, a number of whom would later be influential in the development of the TYA sector. These included Philip Hardy, current artistic director of Barnstorm Theatre Company, and Patrick Sutton, who was to take over as artistic director for TEAM in 1989. Drury himself was to go on to be the founding director of The Ark (1992–2001), Ireland's only arts centre specifically for children. Sutton went on to take up the role of director of the Gaiety School of Acting in 1993, a post he continues to hold.

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TEAM's aim was primarily educational in the broadest sense, producing theatre for children and young people that challenged, inspired and met the concerns of its audience. There was an emphasis on providing an authentic experience that would resonate with the lives of its audiences and thereby challenge them to feel, think, interact and do within the dramatic context. This set of ambitions has been one of the legacies of the company to those making

theatre for children today. In meeting these aims, TEAM produced both original commissions from playwrights and devised work, annually staging two new tours and running interactive workshops with children, primarily in primary and post-primary schools. TEAM nurtured a number of writers who would go on to write for young audiences or adult theatre. Jim Nolan's *Round and Round the Garden* was mounted in 1981, *Heartstone* in 1986 and *Dear Kenny* in 1988. Amongst other endeavours, he would go on to found Red Kettle. Antoine Ó Flatharta was writer in residence, contributing *Dream Walker* and *The Native Ground* in 1989. Nonetheless, although TEAM by the end of the 1980s was firmly established and had a track record of work with many of Ireland's leading playwrights, the company's activities remained largely unseen by the general public. It was rendered doubly so by almost complete omission from critical accounts of Irish theatre practice, professional reviews and academic analyses of the work produced, a major historiographical obstacle in writing this chapter.

Although TEAM was by then running successfully in Dublin, the inspiration for the founding of the Cork-based Graffiti company in 1984 came from a workshop undertaken by Emelie Fitzgibbon at the Goethe Institute run by a TiE company from Berlin.² From its inception, Graffiti's aim was to provide a permanent professional, educational theatre company for Munster (extending later to South Leinster). The materials for its productions came from a number of sources and through different processes. While early work featured pre-existing material from established educational theatre companies, including Duke's Playhouse in Lancaster and the Belgrade TiE Team in Coventry, soon the company was producing scripts from writers in Ireland such as Roger Gregg, including his *Silence in the Ravens* (1985) and later *The Dogs of Chulainn* (1992). A number of early productions were also devised and developed by the company. Some were based on Shakespeare plays, such as *A Modern Othello* (1985) and *Merchant's Club* (1986); while others were issue-based contemporary pieces, such as the 1987 *World of a Difference*, which focused on the representations of underdeveloped countries in the media. Many of these productions were supplemented by workshops and resource materials, something further developed with the creation of an Outreach Department to offer workshops both to children and as a contribution to teacher education and professional development.

The significance of Graffiti's foundational contribution to TYA as a sector within its first five years was to extend its scope, setting up strands of activity on which later companies would pick up. The first was to make work for early years, initiated in 1984 with *Hospitals*, a TiE programme for nursery schools. The second was to take work out of schools and into both mainstream theatre venues and the streets. It had established the Ivern Theatre as its home venue by the second year of its existence (Emelie Fitzgibbon was a founder member of The Cork Theatre Company, which had begun leasing the venue in 1982). With *Graffiti in the Gallery* in 1984 it showed its willingness to develop new spaces for performance, providing a TiE programme for 11- to 14-year-olds on

attitudes to art in the Crawford Municipal Art Gallery. In 1988, it took to the streets with *It's Not Fair*, which was performed as part of the Dublin Street Carnival, the Cork City Carnival and at the Hammersmith Multicultural Festival in London. A third innovation by Graffiti was a concern with the Irish language; in 1986 it mounted *Teanga*, a play designed to heighten awareness of its importance.

Emelie Fitzgibbon calculates that by 1989, TEAM and Graffiti were between them playing to over 130,000 spectators in some twenty counties. Together these two companies had proved that there was a year-round audience for professional theatre for children in Ireland. They had established themselves as part of their immediate communities, but a further aspect also widened the span of their activities. Both companies not only toured to their local schools, but quite early on also began to make links internationally. In 1987 and 1988, Graffiti toured *Circles* to schools in the Poitou-Charentes region of France, and in 1993 toured *Infidel* to the United States as well as remounting *Frog & Toad* as part of the Scottish International Children's Festival. Under Martin Drury, TEAM had already toured to London, representing Ireland twice at the international TiE festival in Stratford East, and Fitzgibbon (1989) noted that the company had also toured to Leeds and to France in the 1980s.

Fitzgibbon notes that this international dimension was consolidated when the two companies came together with Wet Paint to found ASSITEJ-Ireland, the Irish Centre for the International Association of Professional Theatre for Children and Young People. However, despite its initial energy, the collaboration was to go into dormancy for several years until it was revived in 2007 as TYA-Ireland. Since then it has served as the national association representing and promoting professional organizations and individual artists whose work primarily focuses on engaging Irish children and young people through theatre. It provides a crucial link between members, the arts sector, the wider community and government, addressing the relative invisibility of the sector and, crucially, fostering the training of its own members and an international dimension to its work. With TYA companies such as Graffiti and Barnstorm also running their own youth theatres, there is a degree of cross-over with the National Association of Youth Drama, which since its founding in 1980 has both supported the development of youth theatre and acted as an advocate for the benefits of the involvement of young people in theatre.

It was in 1988 that the first northern counterpart was added with the founding of Replay Productions in Belfast. Artistic director Brenda Winter had been one of the founding members of Charabanc, and she had initially conceived of the new company as "a kind of Charabanc for schools. In other words, it was to be a group that privileged the language of this place, the culture and history of this place—and brought that work into the schools".³ Thus, just as with TEAM and Graffiti, a focus on the lived experiences of audiences within a specific geographical locale was a defining characteristic of Replay's work from the outset. This was articulated within its early years through devised work and site-specific performances such as Brenda Winter's *Timetrekker To Tea Lane*

(1989) at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum and *The Normans at Carrick* 159
(1992) at Carrickfergus Castle. 160

However, the company's first production in 1988 was Marie Jones's *Under* 161
Napoleon's Nose, directed by Ian McElhinney, bringing back together some of 162
the former Charabanc team in a play set in Belfast and revisiting the experience 163
of the Blitz of 1941. In many respects, the production provided a model to 164
which the company was to return repeatedly in charting the relationship 165
between Belfast's history and the present day of its audiences within a dramatic 166
frame. The response to that first production convinced Winter of the demand 167
from schools for high-quality professional theatre. Winter, however, did not 168
see it as a TiE company in the mode of Coventry's Belgrade TiE company; 169
rather, it was to produce theatre for an audience that happened to be in an 170
educational setting.⁴ Such a description might not only be applied to much of 171
the work of its two contemporary sister companies, but also indicates a shift 172
from the practices of TiE to those more closely associated with TYA; although 173
within Ireland the distinction between the two fields is far from absolute. 174

While there are rarely single watershed moments in any cultural practice, 175
one can see that by 1989, the main characteristics of the Irish theatre for chil- 176
dren sector had been established, so that it was with some justification that 177
Emelie Fitzgibbon could champion the contribution of TEAM and Graffiti 178
(here extended to Replay, though not in her original) as 179

a substantial force within an Irish theatre scene which does not confine itself to 180
received images of performance, audience and space. It is a force which philo- 181
sophically is not inward looking and which concerns itself with topics, modes and 182
methodologies which are internationally recognized but rooted by the compa- 183
nies' expertise in the audience's own experience.⁵ 184

THE CONTEMPORARY SECTOR 185

From those roots the sector has grown rapidly to become what it is today. 186
Writing, performing or directing theatre for children is no longer an appren- 187
ticeship for proper grown-up theatre-making. Although TEAM was wound up 188
in 2013, over the course of its history it nourished a number of writers who 189
would go on to make a significant contribution to the sector. Maeve Ingoldsby 190
had her first play, *Firestone*, produced by the company in 1990, with three fur- 191
ther plays staged by TEAM, before going on to spend ten years as writer in resi- 192
dence and then script editor with Barnstorm. Graffiti too has commissioned 193
and engaged with a large number of writers. Raymond Scannell scripted a 194
number of productions for the company, including *Striking Distance* (2001), 195
A Day in the Life of a Pencil (2004), *Closed Circuit* (2006) and *Permutations* 196
& Palpitations (2009). Graffiti has also sought to make such work available by 197
publishing playscripts, including Scannell's *A Day in the Life of a Pencil* and *The* 198
Lost Ones by Laurie Brooks, a script for professional production to younger 199
teenagers. 200

Replay has a similar track record of commissioning a range of new writers and supporting their development through a variety of projects. There have been original commissions of plays from Northern Irish playwrights, including Winter herself. Marie Jones has written six plays for the company, including *It's a Waste of Time*, *Tracey* (1989), *The Cow*, *The Ship* and *The Indian* (1991) and *Hiring Days* (1992). Damian Gorman has contributed four plays, including *Ground Control to Davy Mental* (1992) and *Sometimes* (1998). Other notable Northern Irish writers producing original work for the company include Nicola McCartney and Gary Mitchell.

Both Graffiti and Replay have been eager too to extend the repertoire of work beyond Ireland. Graffiti has commissioned new plays from writers such as Mike Kenny, including *The Lost Child* (2002) and *Cloud Pictures* (2008) (some of which were also produced in Irish translation) and producing existing scripts from other anglophone contexts, including the Canadian Joan MacLeod's *The Shape of a Girl* (2011) and *Hoods* (2014) by Australian playwright Angela Betzien. The company also commissioned an original piece from Betzien, *Where in the World is Frank Sparrow?*, in 2012. Replay too has turned to existing repertoire elsewhere, producing works such as *The Lost Child* by Mike Kenny (1998) and Moira Buffini's *Marianne Dreams* (2012).

Alongside Graffiti and Replay, the range of companies working currently includes Barnstorm Theatre Company, Branar, Cahoots NI, Cups and Crowns, Fíabín, Meitheal na mBeag, Monkeyshine Theatre, Moonfish, Pignut Productions, Púca Puppets, Sticky Fingers and Theatre Lovett. There is scarcely a region or county where children will now not have access to high-quality professional theatre made specifically for them. These companies have each in their own way followed the precedents that TEAM, Graffiti and Replay pioneered. The rest of this chapter, then, will explore how they have maintained a fundamental commitment to local audiences; developed an international perspective; and engaged in cross-sectoral collaboration. I will argue too that these features are most fully expressed in the growth of an additional feature: international festivals of theatre for children.

PERFORMING THE LOCAL

The commitment to local audiences within TYA does not just involve returning repeatedly to the same set of schools for audiences (though such relationships are important), but is expressed in a number of other ways. Replay's Brenda Winter notes, for example, parallels between the tastes of audiences for popular political performance advocated by John McGrath and the tastes of the school children in Replay's audiences, including localism of place and identity.⁶ Thus, the most straightforward expression of localism is in choosing subject material that engages with and matters to the audience.

One example of an approach to this is Gary Owen's play *Bulletproof* mounted by Replay Productions, then under the directorship of David Fenton, in 2010. The piece was in response to increasing concern in the local media about

mental health issues amongst young people; the company's own growing awareness of these issues through their work in secondary schools; and Owen's own experience of suicide by young people in his home town of Bridgend, Wales. These were given sharp focus in a government report on mental health in 2007. Owen interviewed young people in Belfast and used their words and stories to construct an adapted form of Verbatim Theatre, in which real experiences were fictionalized in the mouths of his two central characters, brother and sister Michael and Alex. Using the technique of direct audience narration, the play recounts the events leading up to and the aftermath of Michael's suicide. This use of verbatim and its close references to Belfast provided a compelling sense of authenticity that tied the play to both a specific geographical location and an issue of vital concern to its audiences.

The strongest commitment to a locale is evident where companies have set down roots in running venues specifically for children's theatre. Graffiti now runs its administrative offices, its outreach department, an auditorium and studio space in its premises on Assumption Road in Cork. It also has two attached youth theatres, blurring the lines between theatre *for* and theatre *by* young people. Barnstorm's commitment to its home locale in Kilkenny for over twenty years similarly includes running its own venue, The Barn Theatre, close to the city centre. From that base, the company not only mounts its own productions and outreach activity, but supports its youth theatres, Community Theatre and adult theatre clubs.

The development of The Ark as a specialist, purpose-built cultural centre for pre-teen children might be seen as the boldest initiative in providing a home for theatre for children. When the Irish government was considering how to regenerate the area of Dublin's Temple Bar in 1991, Martin Drury was engaged to conduct a feasibility study for just such a venue. With the support of the city council, national government and European funding, The Ark opened its doors in 1995 as Europe's first custom-designed arts centre for children. It commissions and hosts professional work, activities and workshops across all art forms. It has had notable successes in commissioning theatre work, premiering *The Giant Blue Hand* by Marina Carr, which received a nomination for an *Irish Times* Theatre Award in 2009, for example. In 2010, Louis Lovett was appointed The Ark's first theatre-maker in residence, and *The Girl who Forgot to Sing Badly* was presented by The Ark in association with Theatre Lovett in the spring of 2011 and as part of the Ulster Bank Dublin Theatre Festival, followed by a national tour.

A further dimension of the localism of Ireland's TYA sector is the way in which companies engage in sustained outreach projects with their local communities. One example of this is Barnstorm's engagement with the Townlands Project (2010), a creative exploration of the north Kilkenny landscape within the nine townlands of the old civil parish of Rathcoole. Barnstorm's involvement culminated in a production of *The Spooky Feast in the Scary Field* on 24 June. This was a collaborative project between artist Alan Counihan, Johnswell National School and Barnstorm's Outreach Officer, Anna Galligan, that used

material that had been generated by pupils of the school some seventy years previously as the basis of a performance by the contemporary pupils. As documented on Barnstorm's website, the overall aim of the drama strand was to present the local place to local people in a new way. To achieve this each class group worked in a different way. The youngest worked primarily through movement, visuals and group rhymes. They devized around the idea of seasons and what happens to the land throughout the year. The largest group with the widest age range was the first to third class group. Six of the stories taken from the pupils of 1937–38 were chosen to be presented in storytelling form with a narrator and characters speaking the lines; as well as the whole group working to create a story, which they then performed as a chorus.

A more distinctively Irish expression of localism has been in the turn toward the Irish language. In 1999, Graffiti produced its first show *as Gaelige: Scéal faoi Bhláth*, which toured to Irish-medium schools and schools in the Munster, Connemara and Donegal Gaeltachts. However, of all the companies that have produced work in the Irish language, it is Galway's Branar Téatar do Pháistí founded by Marc Mac Lochlainn in 2001 that has generated the most sustained output. Its mission statement is "Insíonn muid scéalta móra do shaorán-aigh Beaga / We tell big stories to little citizens", neatly summarizing both its ambition and its commitment. As with many of its sister companies, Branar's work is multi-faceted involving professional productions, outreach activities and a commitment to training artists and teachers.

Their productions (one or two new shows opening annually alongside productions in the repertoire) play in schools that may be Irish-medium or where Irish is just part of the broader curriculum. This has had implications for the work, which although performed in the Irish tongue, cannot rely on its audiences having even a basic knowledge of the language. This awareness has prompted experimentation with different visual forms, including object manipulation, mask, commedia dell'arte, physical theatre and puppetry. One benefit of both the company's development of its repertoire of puppet shows and its highly visual performance modes has been the facility to tour the work internationally.

Clann Lir (2010) exemplifies this link between local rootedness in Irish language and culture and the international. A re-telling of the myth of the Children of Lir, the performance uses puppetry and newly composed traditional Irish music by Michael Chang and Freda Nic Giolla Chatháin to create a vividly visual and hauntingly beautiful sonic experience for audiences from six years of age upwards. It was developed initially as a music-led piece but was reworked subsequently to give greater prominence to a poetic text that would match the music and movement of the puppets. As part of the Branar repertoire, it has been remounted in a number of tours across Ireland. In 2012, for example, it was presented at six venues and festivals across Ireland, and was performed internationally for the first time at the Cologne Children's Literature Festival in Germany.

If work in the Irish language represents one way of engaging with the specifics of the local audience, a further way has been the creation of bespoke forms of performance that have extended the understanding both of who the audience of TYA might be, and what might even count as *theatre* for such an audience. Under Anna Newell’s artistic directorship, from 2011 to 2016, Replay evolved two new strands of work that saw the company making even more bespoke forms of work for children. *Babble* (2013) was the first in a series of works engaging with babies that included *Tiny* (2014) and culminated in BabyDay in 2015, which saw the staging of over eighty events at more than twenty venues all over Belfast, focusing on families with babies and young children.

A second focus of bespoke theatre-making under Newell was a return to a strand of work that the company had initiated in the 1990s, making work for children with special needs. Projects such as Paul Boyd’s *Smelly Won’t Behave!* (2001) usually involved bringing a short play into designated special schools and then working as a company-in-residence to make a performance piece with the pupils. Newell reviewed that model and after a period of consultation, the company changed direction to embark on the task of making work for children with profound and multiple learning disabilities that would blend participation and performance, through projects such as *Bliss* (2012), *Closer* (2014) and *Into the Blue* (2015).

Such opening up of the performance process to the participation of the audience as a means of creating bespoke theatre was also developed for more mainstream audiences in *Once Upon a Time*, by performer/illustrator Patrick Sanders and performer Mary Jordan. This interactive piece for 5- to 8-year-olds finds Sanders and Jordan as The Very Trusted and Nearly Excellent Guardians of Tall Tales and Small Stories, who look after a magical library containing all the stories ever made. Following a fire, the guardians have had to reconstruct the library and they have managed to do this with one last exception. Unfortunately, neither of the guardians can remember the details of the story and they enlist the audience to construct it for them. With Jordan engaging the audience through a series of guided questions and suggestions, the mute Sanders communicates by drawing out the suggestions as an extended sequence of cartoons. Once the story has been created and the drawing finished, Jordan is then able to retell it in its completeness. While the process for this work is fundamentally the same, the outcome is a bespoke performance for the particular audience in that place and time: a uniquely local production.

AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

While in the previous section I emphasized the ways in which TYA in Ireland is resolutely local, such localism is informed by and engages with practices drawn from other countries and theatre cultures in a way that has been largely resisted by mainstream theatrical and dramatic practice in Ireland. This internationalism has had several effects: it has informed the choice of dramatic repertoire;

collaborations with artists from other countries and contexts have led to the adoption of models of practice from other theatrical cultures; and the engagement with audiences outside of Ireland through touring and appearances at festivals and events in other countries has developed the confidence and expertise of Irish TYA makers.

As discussed earlier, each of the pioneering companies turned to works or writers from outside Ireland to develop their repertoire. In some instances, this has produced longer-term relationships that mean companies repeatedly commission the same writer or produce their work. Thus, Barnstorm has staged a range of works by Mike Kenny including *Big Sister, Little Brother* (2008), *Boy with a Suitcase* (2009), *The Song from the Sea* (2011) and *Ice Child* (2014). It has also collaborated with Sarah Argent from Welsh company Theatr Iolo to write *The Bockety World of Henry & Bucket* (2013) and *Me Too!* (2015), for example. CAHOOTS NI has a similar track record of working with Charles Way, staging his *A Spell of Cold War* (2012) and *Nivelli's War* (2013) and commissioning *The Gift* (2015).

A more significant aspect of internationalism is that it has enabled companies to collaborate directly with artists from other countries and contexts. In 2009, Marc Mac Lochlainn invited Bjarne Sandborg of Denmark's Teater Refleksion to work through an extended rehearsal period for *An Seanfhear Beag*, itself an adaptation of *The Story of the Little Old Man* by Swedish writer Barbro Lindgren (a staple source for TYA performances in continental Europe). This collaboration was picked up again in the 2012 production of *Croí á Mhúscailt*, a version of the book *The Heart and the Bottle* by Oliver Jeffers for children between 7 and 12 years old. Again using custom-made wooden puppets, it was co-directed by Mac Lochlainn and Sandborg. The project deepened the collaboration, since the Branar company worked with Teater Refleksion for a week in Denmark, opening the show for a short run of four performances in Aarhus, before a ten-venue tour in Ireland. A third collaboration between Branar and Teater Refleksion, again involving an adaptation of a book by Jeffers, *The Way Back Home*, premiered at the Dublin Theatre Festival in 2014. The designer for the production was Teater Refleksion's Mariann Agaard. Such collaborations have developed the practice of Branar as the Irish host company in the field of puppetry as well as broadening its visual aesthetic. They have also encouraged and supported the company's confidence in undertaking collaborations with other Irish artists, both working within theatre and in other art forms. So, for example, for the 2014 adaptation of John Light's book *The Flower*, produced as *Bláth*, the company commissioned paper artist Maeve Clancy to design and build the paper set and Colm Mac Con Iomaire of the pop group The Frames to compose the original score.

A similar example of collaboration can be seen in the process by which Sligo-based Monkeyshine developed its original show *Losha* in 2011. The show was created over a year as part of the theatre-maker in residence scheme with Roscommon Arts Centre and Roscommon County Council. Under a mentoring scheme through which young Irish groups were paired with established

companies in other countries, the artistic director of Baboró, Lali Morris, arranged for Kareen Pennefather and James Jobson of Monkeyshine Theatre to be mentored by Charlot Lemonine of the acclaimed French company Theatre Vélo. *Losha* is the story of an unusual creature who collects other people's forgotten moments. She finds them stuck in a variety of discarded objects, which she gathers during the night. A lost shoe holds a love story, a birthday candle still holds the wish that blew it out and a soft toy is filled with forgotten fears of the dark. The influence of Theatre Vélo's long history of creating performances where actors interact with objects to create images, using few or no words, is evident in what has become a signature piece for Monkeyshine.

Irish TYA has further benefitted from its engagement with audiences in other cultures and contexts through touring and appearances at festivals. Most straightforwardly, this has involved extending tours to other parts of the British Isles to take in festivals and events, such as when Barnstorm's *Boy with a Suitcase* toured to the Opening Doors International Festival in Wales in 2010, or following its original runs of *The Bockety World of Henry & Bucket* with stagings at the Imagine Festival in Edinburgh and then a tour across the UK in 2015. Similarly, The Ark/Theatre Lovett's *The Girl who Forgot to Sing Badly* toured to Scotland as part of The Bank of Scotland Imagine Festival in May 2011. Companies have also taken up invitations further afield, such as when TEAM's *Devotion* by Leo Butler toured to South Africa in September 2010 or when Fíbin travelled to Malawi to perform *An Rón Dall* and conduct puppeteering workshops with the local children in March 2011.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the TYA sector of the United States has also provided opportunities for Irish TYA artists to engage internationally. New Visions, New Voices at the Kennedy Centre, Washington DC is a biennial national festival for plays-in-progress that has supported the development of projects by Irish theatre-makers. In 2014, the festival invited Graffiti to bring *Gile na Gealaí* and CAHOOTS NI *The Gift* as part of the development of each of these new works. The United States has also become a more feasible option for the touring of Irish TYA work. In 2013, Replay remounted its co-production with Assault Events of *Wobble* for five days at the Irish Arts Center in New York, alongside workshops and seminars. It followed this, in 2015, with a remount of another of its shows for babies, *Babble*, at the New Victory Theatre on New York's 42nd Street for a run of seventeen performances. In 2016, CAHOOTS NI undertook a sixteen-venue tour of the States with its production *Egg*.

Such internationalism has been championed too by the involvement of both TYA-Ireland and TYA-NI (a constituent member of TYA-UK) with the work of ASSITEJ. Representatives attend the organization's congress, interim events, artistic gatherings and festivals. They contribute too to its organization and policy development, as well as participating in its networks such as Small Size, for example. In collaboration with TYA-UK, the Irish organizations won the right to stage an artistic gathering in Birmingham, *On the Edge*, showcasing work and providing a week-long programme of seminars and workshops.

One of the key developments in the sector in Ireland that has supported both this international exchange and the consolidation of the cross-sectoral collaboration that is distinctive about TYA in Ireland has been the creation of festivals across the country. Although TEAM had participated in the Dublin Theatre Fringe from its early days, it was Graffiti that led the development of festivals for children with its ACTIVATE Festival in 1992 in conjunction with the Everyman Theatre in Cork. From this precedent have grown festivals across the country. Since then children's arts festivals have sprung up across the country, including Roscommon Arts Centre's *Lollipop*s, a programme of events for children and young people; Castlebar's RoolaBoola Children's Arts Festival; the Sticky Fingers Festival in Newry; and Hullabaloo! in Offaly. October 1997 saw the first festival in Galway, Baboró, now one of the biggest festivals in the country. Initially an off-shoot of the Galway Arts Festival, under the fourteen-year leadership of Lali Morris it established an international reputation when it became a stand-alone event, attracting children's artists, dramatists and educationalists from all over the world. A similar trajectory can be seen in Young at Art's annual Belfast Children's Festival under the leadership of Ali Fitzgibbon, who took over the role in 2003 after six years as the producer at Replay, stepping down in 2016. From programming theatre performances, she also expanded the experience of performance for its audiences, including through transforming the large-scale space of the Waterworks park in North Belfast as Festival Goes to the Waterworks (2008 and 2010) and creating the world's first Baby Rave in 2005.

Such festivals not only showcase the best of Irish TYA, but also open up the field for both artists and audiences to the influence and example of the best of work from across the globe. Thus, for example, Belfast Children's Festival has programmed work by La Baracca, Italy; Compagnia RODISIO, Italy; Daniel Morden and Oli Wilson-Dickson, Wales; Erfreuliches Theatrefurt, Germany; Het Filiaal, The Netherlands and Junges Ensemble, Germany. A further effect of such festivals is to provide a focused and concentrated opportunity for audiences to see work of the highest quality. As Hautpfeisch notes, "[t]he arguments for the festivalization of culture in the world today⁷ (Kapstein 1996) seem to suggest that the arts festival circuit may actually in some cases have come to represent the theatrical 'season' in certain countries".⁸ Collaborating with other festivals across both Ireland and the whole of the United Kingdom has also made it possible in some cases to combine costs and make tours viable.

In this chapter, I have charted the development of TYA on what might appear to be an untroubled linear path to success. Each and every artist and company has nonetheless faced different challenges and obstacles that have conditioned

the work, including the inevitable processes of applying for and securing funding from private sponsors, public agencies and third-sector partners. That they have managed to shape a sector of practice the quality of which is recognized internationally within these conditions is praiseworthy. Yet its significance is much more than that: this sector has expanded the conception of what constitutes Irish theatre. Rather than focusing on specific dramatic tropes or thematic concerns that might hitherto have been regarded as distinctively or uniquely Irish, or returning to the lineage of Irish literary theatre, TYA has embraced a diverse range of forms of expression, topics and modes of practice, reaching a wide range of audiences, across the country (and abroad) and across a wide social demographic. Its internationalism has engaged with and mirrored the fracturing of hitherto dominant conceptions of a homogeneous Irish identity in the last twenty years in particular. By doing so while retaining a commitment to its specific audiences, it has simultaneously brought the global to the local, recognizing and validating the lives and experiences of its spectators as important; a counter-narrative to the sense within mass media that the universal is elsewhere. Yet, these achievements remain obscured in Irish theatre history and historiography. Few scripts are published and even fewer studied in formal educational settings, despite a substantial legacy of new writing. By comparison with other sectors, there is little formal training at higher-level education institutions. TYA may have come of age, but it remains a hidden gem.

NOTES 529

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2. Aidan Harman, “Graffiti”, *Theatre Ireland* 23 (1990): 37. 533
3. Brenda Winter, “Brenda Winter interviewed by Eugene McNulty”, in *The Theatre of Marie Jones*, ed. Eugene McNulty and Tom Maguire (Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2015), 68. 534-536
4. Ibid., 69. 537
5. Emelie Fitzgibbon, “TiE Hits Back”, *Theatre Ireland* 19 (1989): 17. 538
6. Winter, “Brenda Winter interviewed by Eugene McNulty”, 69. 539
7. . 540
8. Temple Hauptfleisch, “Festivals as Eventifying Systems” in *Festivalising! Theatrical Events, Politics and Culture*, ed. Temple Hauptfleisch et al. (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007), 39. 541-543

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 568 Press, 2015.

AU13

AU14

Author Queries

Chapter No.: 10 0003622434

Queries	Details Required	Author's Response
AU1	"Tom Maguire" has been affiliated to "University College Dublin". Please check if correct, otherwise, provide the correct affiliation with appropriate city and country details.	
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AU8	In the sentence starting 'Some were based...' please check whether 'World of a Difference' should be 'World of Difference'.	
AU9	In the sentence starting 'Emelie Fitzgibbon calculates...', please give source for this.	
AU10	In the sentence starting 'Fitzgibbon notes that this...', please clarify what ASSITEJ stands for.	
AU11	In the sentence starting 'Artistic Director Brenda Winter...' please explain what Charabanc is.	
AU12	In the sentence starting 'As Hauptfleisch notes...', please replace the Harvard citation Kapstein 1996 with an appropriate endnote reference, to match the style of the rest of the chapter; also complete note 7 please.	
AU13	Please check the usage of 'TYANI' should it be "TYA NI."	
AU14	In the bibliography reference for TYA NI, the link for TYA NI does not appear to work. Please check.	